New-York Daily Tribune.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CLERGY.

ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN PULPIT. By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D. Vols. III. and IV., 8vo. Robert Carter & Brothers.

In spite of the wet blanket which the consequences of the recent financial crisis have spread over most of the important literary enterprises of the day, Dr. Sprague appears to be cheerily pursuing his laborious task, and after a little delay, has now presented the public with two more installments of his noble work. The former volumes, noticed in this journal at the time of their publication, were devoted to the commemoration of Orthodox Congregationalists; the present are occupied with clergymen of the Presbyterian church, and accordingly embrace a wider geographical range, leaving New-England, to which the first two volumes were mainly confined, for the more extensive, if not more fertile spiritual fields of the Western, Middle, and Southern States. The elaborate sketches here given include a singular variety of character. They show conclusively that identity of religious creed by no means involves a sameness of personal qualities. Specimens of almost every type of human individuality are presented in this curious museum, from the erudite and stately professor of theology, to the bold, off-hand, unpolished pioneer of the Gospel in the back-woods. They form a study of peculiar interest, and to the genuine love of biography, without reference to narrow persona affinities, present a store of rich materials, that are no less attractive than they are informing.

One of the originals which grace the early portion of the work was Samuel Buell, D. D., of East Hampton L. I. (1741-1798), of whose quaint habits, we have several characteristic anecdotes. Here is one showing how he beguiled the people into patience with long sermons:

There are some amusing traditions in respect to the manner in which he sometimes contrived to prevent his hearers from leaving the church before the sermon was over. The two following I received from Dr. Miller. On one occasion, after preaching nearly two hours—as long as he could feel secure of the presence of all his hearers—he remarked that he had done preaching to sinners and they were at liberty to go—the rest of his discourse would be addressed to good people. A gentleman, who once went to hear him, stated that, when the hour-glass was nearly ready to be turned a second time from the commencement of his sermon, he said (much to the relief of the person who related it), "*Once more*"—after going on some eight or ten minutes longer, he said—"*To conclude*"—and after another about equal interval, he said—"*Lastly:*" the gentleman added that he expected every moment to hear him say—"*Everlastingly.*"

Some of the most interesting events of his ministry were in connection with the Revolutionary war. A portion of the British land forces and a large squadron of the navy were stationed in his immediate vicinity. Hence he came into frequent contact with the British officers, who were fond of the society of the ready-witted pastor, though in any wordy conflict they usually came off second best. Some anecdotes are told that strikingly illustrate the high estimation in which he was held by them, as well as the fearlessness of his spirit and the quickness of his repartee:

The Commander-in-Chief of the land forces remarked to him that he had commanded some of his farmers to appear on a certain day (I believe on the Sabbath), with their teams, at Southampton, twelve miles distant. "So I have understood," said the Doctor; "but I have countermanded your orders;" and, in consequence of this countermand, the project was relinquished. A young British officer, recently arrived, rode to his door and said, "I wish to see Mr. Buell." The Doctor soon appeared. "Are you Mr. Buell?" was the question. "My name is Buell, Sir." "Then," said the officer, bowing with great respect, "I have seen the god of East Hampton." On one occasion he was invited by the officers to accompany them on a deer-hunt. The invitation was accepted. But the Doctor, perceiving that one of the company was dissatisfied on account of some delay, at the commencement of the excursion, pleasantly asked him: "And what portion of his Majesty's troops, Sir, have you the honor to command?" "A legion of devils direct from hell," was the answer. The Doctor, assuming an attitude of profound respect, replied, "Then I presume, Sir, I have the honor of addressing Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." The officer, as if about to revenge what he considered an insult, drew his sword. But at the smile and nod of his superior, he instantly sheathed it again. Before the excursion was ended, however, he became greatly interested in the Doctor, and it was evident that whatever unpleasant impression the occurrence had occasioned was entirely removed.

He was a great lover of good company, and few ministers of his day were so besieged by visitors, especially from New-England.

To his clerical brethren he always gave a most cordial welcome; but one or more sermons to his people was the tax which each one had to pay for his hospitable reception. From this tax no minister of regular standing and of sufficient strength to preach, was exempt. But there was this amusing difference—Baptists and Methodists must address his people from the deacons' seat, while those of his own denomination only were admitted to the pulpit—the "sanctum sanctorum," as he was wont to call it. The ringing of the bell at 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon, or a little before sunset, was the signal that a minister was in town, and that public worship would commence in about one hour; and in due season a respectable audience was always collected. He was once visited by two licentiates of the names of Cramm and More. Cramm preached in the afternoon. At the close of the exercises the Doctor informed the congregation that there would be preaching in the evening. He then turned to the young men in the pulpit and said, with his characteristic pleasantry, though certainly with questionable propriety, "My people have been *Cramm'd* but they want *More*."

Apropos of the Rev. Dr. Power (1772-1830), we have a lively picture of the position of the Western preacher in the olden time from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Carnahan of Princeton:

To appreciate the labors and self-denial of Dr. Power, and other clergymen who settled in Western Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary War, it is necessary to keep in view the difficulties and dangers to which, in common with other pioneers, they were exposed. The journey over the mountains—not less than a hundred and twenty miles—was not what it now is. There were no macadamized roads, or canals, or railroads. A horse-path over rocks, and precipices, and marshes, was the only way of access to what was significantly called "the Back Woods." Nor could the direct route through Chambersburg and Bedford be taken with safety. Parties of Indians hovered around, and murdered many families on their way to the West. On that road there are places whose names (such as "the Burned Cabins," "Bloody Run," &c.), to this day indicate the barbarous acts of that period. To avoid the tomahawk and scalping-knife, a southern route through Hagerstown, Hancock and Cumberland, in Maryland, was usually taken, thence following Braddock's road over the mountains. And this road was not suitable to wheel-carriages. Many, like Father McMillan, passed through the "Great Valley" to Staunton in Virginia, and thence over the mountains to Tiger's Valley. At present a journey to Missouri or Iowa can be performed in less time, and with less than half the labor and danger, necessary at that time to reach "the Back Woods." When the mountains were passed, accommodations, not very attractive, were found. In the whole County of Westmoreland, then covering more than twice the space it now does, there was not, in 1781, a single stone, or brick, or frame house. All the inhabitants lived in log cabins, more or less comfortable, according to the means of the occupants. The difficulty of obtaining articles necessary in carrying on farming operations was very great. Iron, with which that country now abounds, had to be carried on pack horses over the mountains; and salt, which now may be purchased for 20 cents, could not, at that time, be had for less than $5 per bushel. The want of mills to grind their bread was severely felt. In addition to these difficulties, and others which I omit, the inhabitants were not safe from the incursions of the Indians. In 1782, the year after Dr. Power arrived, Hanna's Town, the seat of County justice, 12 miles from Mount Pleasant, was burned, several persons killed, and the daughters of Hanna, the proprietor of the place, were carried off captive by the Indians. Between the years 1780 and 1785, the Indians made several incursions into the Sewickly settlements, murdered families, and retreated over the Allegheny River, before men could be collected to pursue them. The accommodations for public worship were also as rare and unsightly as the private dwellings of the people. They did not wait until they were able to erect a stone or brick building, costing from $2,000 to $10,000; nor did they send Commissioners to ask aid from their wealthier brethren in the East. They took their axes, cut down trees, and, with their own hands, erected a log building, to protect them from the snow in Winter, and from the rain in Summer. Except in inclement weather, they worshiped in the open air, under the shade of the native forests.

Posterity will find it difficult to conceive of the rudeness of these primitive churches. They were constructed entirely with the ax. No saw, or plane, or even hammer to drive a nail, was used; for neither nails, nor iron in any other shape, were employed. The roof was of clap-boards, kept in their places by logs laid upon them; and the doors were also clap-boards, fastened by wooden pins to cross bars, projecting sufficiently far at one side to form a part of the hinge. The windows were small openings, cut in two adjacent logs, and were glazed with oil paper or linen. The floors, when any they had, were cleft logs, smoothed by the ax. These churches were of different forms. The most simple and common were square or parallelogramic, having only four sides—a single log extending from corner to corner. But when the congregation was large, and timber of sufficient length could not be had to make a four-sided structure of suitable dimensions, the cruciform was adopted; and there were twelve sides and twelve corners. In justice to these old-fashioned Presbyterians, it must be understood that the twelve sides and the twelve corners were not intended to represent the twelve Apostles; nor was the cruciform adopted from a religious regard to the rules of ecclsiastical architecture, but to secure strength and convenience. And such buildings were both strong and convenient. The parts mutually supported each other, and one part of the transept was the preacher's stand, and the other part opposite accommodated a portion of the audience.

A string of striking anecdotes and recollections of Dr. David Porter of Catskill is given by his successor, the Rev. Mr. Howard. We pick out a few of them almost at random:

When he walked abroad, his personal appearance must have arrested the eye of every stranger. His head was like Napoleon's; his neck was short; his body large and fleshy; his legs were unusually small, tightly encased in short-cloths, and beneath these in black silk hose. He carried a large cane, and his motions were quick, nervous and awkward.

When he stood in the pulpit and became interested in his sermon, his short, dense sentences, jerked out with a nod, his strange and violent gestures, and his stamping foot, called a smile upon the faces of all who were not accustomed to them. Even clergymen, sitting with him in the pulpit, were sometimes unable to control their countenances. But he was wholly unconscious of these effects; he was absorbed in his subject, and soon gained entire control of his hearers.

In the lecture room, his manner was still more remarkable. He frequently spoke with his cane in hand, and brought it down with his emphatic foot, bending his whole body to give force to the gesture. He would walk to and fro, and becoming more excited as he spoke, he would sometimes descend to the floor of the room; step over a bench to arrive at an open space; walk up and down there for a while; step over another bench opposite to the former, and return to the desk on the farther side; continuing and closing his address without exhibiting the slightest consciousness of what he was doing with his peripatetic body.

When he called upon any one to pray, he would sometimes add in a tone more of command than request, "Be short!" His own exercises were very brief; but they were very comprehensive and instructive. He wasted no words. His thoughts were new, fresh, and expressed in striking language. When speaking he used periods, if I may speak so, between the clauses of his sentences, or as though he employed hyphens for commas; and thus, though otherwise his utterance was rapid, every word that he delivered told upon the listener.

Notwithstanding his eccentricities, he was regarded with unbounded reverence. No one dictated to him; no one remonstrated with him. He took counsel with himself, and, with some deference to forms, carried through that on which he had determined, without opposition. The children all regarded him as a superior being. One remembers—and tells it with a smile at her former self—how she thought his person and dress the standard of ministerial appearance, looking with low esteem and some suspicion upon small and thin men who wore loose pantaloons. Another always associated him with the highest mountain in the Catskill range. Another had very confused and interchangeable ideas of Dr. Porter and the Saviour. Another, for a year or two, thought he was God. When he met them and stopped, as was his custom, and took their hands between his thumb and the tips of his fingers, and said in his kind, absent-minded way, "How d'do child," it awed them, and was an event to be remembered. This reverence continued as they grew older, and began to understand his sermons, and a good degree of it remained as long as he lived. At one time he catechised the children occasionally on Saturday afternoon. But he never got much beyond the first page, they say; and he had a pleasant habit of answering the questions himself when there was the slightest hesitation, and saying, "Very well, child; very well."

A few anecdotes chosen from the many which are told of him, may serve further to illustrate his eccentricities.

He never could be induced to converse, or to express an opinion upon any subject, when he thought silence the better course. With a dull, uninterested look, he would seem unconscious of the speaker's words, and though his eye rested upon him, almost of his presence. When the questioner ceased, there would follow a dead pause. "Don't you think so, Doctor?" No answer—no consciousness. Then, waking suddenly from his apparent abstraction, he would speak of something wholly remote from the subject of the inquiry, or conveying a subtle reproof for meddling with it.

In these times of apparent reverie, he heard and weighed every word that was uttered, and not unfrequently quoted a remark against his baffled questioner, who thought, at the time he uttered it, the Doctor, in his fit of abstraction, had not heard a single word.

In later years he was singularly absent-minded. He was accustomed to pray with his eyes wide open. One evening, at a "neighborhood meeting," his prayer was drawing to a conclusion, when he saw before him a young lady to whom he was greatly attached, and who had returned that day from a long absence. Suddenly, to the astonishment of all present, he crossed the room and extended his hand, exclaiming with a voice of hearty pleasure: "*O! how d'do?*" He was totally unconscious of the irregularity, and no thought of it subsequently embarrassed him.

On another occasion, somewhat later in life, he was praying in the presence of several clergymen and a large audience at a union prayer-meeting for colleges. Always interested in the religious welfare of students, he had been excited by the statements which had just been made. He was pleading fervently for the spirit of prayer in our churches, and enforcing his petition with "arguments," when, suddenly changing from prayer to exhortation, he exclaimed to the standing assembly, bringing down hand and foot to enforce his words: "Yes, brethren, we must *pray* more! That's what we want. More prayer! more prayer!"—and, after adding a few more sentences, he turned to the clergyman who had been speaking, and said, "Go on, Sir; go on."

To illustrate his "management"—he had much of the harmless wisdom so useful to one who has to deal with men.

He never gave a direct reproof, but at times he suggested one that was not easily forgotten. A young man who had recently become a professor of religion, was standing one Sabbath with his companions near the church. The conversation became trifling, and he was laughing heartily at something which had been said, when the Doctor, who stood at a little distance with a clergyman who was to preach for him, called to the young man and beckoned him to approach. When he came near he introduced him to the stranger, mentioning his name in full, and saying in a marked and serious manner, "*a member of the church, Sir; a member of the church!*" The youth in later years became an elder, and he told me that the influence of that rebuke had not left him for an hour since it was given.

After resigning the pastorate, he became the agent of several benevolent societies, and collected great sums for them in this village and in the adjacent country. He approached each man in a different way. He would sometimes name a specific sum; saying, "Mr. X., it is a good cause, Sir, a good cause, but you mustn't give too much; $50 is enough, Sir." Mr. X. would probably have decided upon $10.

He was told of one man, a wealthy farmer, who had said he was "determined to give him nothing that year any way." Shortly before harvest the Doctor made it convenient to stop at his house. He soon interested him in the operations of the society for which he was then collecting, but nothing was said about a subscription. He remained to dinner. Before the repast was over, the man's mind was filled with the noblest missionary views. To spread the glad tidings of salvation was made to appear the great work and joy of the Christian's life. After dinner they walked out upon the piazza. "Whose farm is *that*, Sir?" said the Doctor, extending his hand with a wide gesture toward a large tract covered with ripening grain. "That is mine." "Yours!—a large farm—beautiful farm!" After a pause, during which the Doctor was looking round in sincere admiration upon the scene of life and beauty, he exclaimed, "Whose farm is that, way over by those woods, Sir?" "That is mine, too." "Fine meadows—very large farm—very *valuable* farm. Who owns the woods?" "They belong to me, Sir." "Umph." Charging his position so as to command another view, he said, after a while, "Your neighbor has a heavy crop there; very rich land; whose is that, Sir?" "Well," the man answered, growing a little restless, "my farm goes about as far as you can see, Doctor—that's all mine." "All yours!" Then turning upon him with a serious, almost reproachful, look, he said, "God has done a great deal for you; what are you going to do for Him?" A pause ensued which seemed to repeat the question and demand an answer. I do not know the reply; but as a result of the interview, the Doctor carried away the farmer's subscription for a larger amount than ever. He was irresistible. Those who knew his way, when he began to draw out of them proofs of their prosperity, often cut short his approaches by saying, with a smile of surrender, "How much shall I give, Doctor?"

The following anecdote, which I received from the lips of the person to whom it refers, is very characteristic. He had sold some valuable books to a young clergyman of another denomination in the village. Some months had slipped by, and payment had been delayed. The Doctor was sitting on his "stoop" one bright morning, when his debtor passed, politely saluting him. "Young man!" cried the Doctor. He turned and came back to the gate, as the Doctor rose from his chair. "Those *books*." Then, with a gesture of serious courtesy, he added, "Pay for them when you please, Sir; pay for them when you please!" And, without waiting for an answer, turned and went into the house. They were paid for the next day.

Some original and highly characteristic reminiscences of the celebrated Dr. Mason of this city are given by the Rev. Dr. McCartee of Newburgh and others. Here is a specimen of his political preaching, which it seems was no less offensive to certain thin-skinned hearers than the same article is now-a-days:

There was another sermon of which I retain a distinct remembrance, and to which I advert, partly because I regard it as one of Dr. Mason's greatest efforts, and partly because it serves to illustrate a feature of character for which he was distinguished above most men: I refer to his fearless disregard of consequences in the discharge of what he deemed a public duty. The sermon was preached upon a Fast day, and at a time of extreme political excitement. Personal violence had been threatened in case he denounced, as he had before done, the proposed alliance with France. I myself remember to have heard a young lawyer and a violent partisan declare that "if the Doctor dared to repeat the thing, even the horns of the altar should not protect him, for he would himself be one of the first to pull him out of the pulpit." When the Fast day arrived, a large audience assembled, expecting to hear a sermon "to the times." The Doctor chose for his text Ezekiel ii., 3, and the whole chapter was read in his most impressive manner. Near the close of his discourse, he broke forth into a solemn and impassioned apostrophe to Deity in nearly these words: "Send us, if thou wilt, murrain upon our cattle, a famine upon our land, cleanness of teeth in our borders; send us pestilence to waste our cities; send us, if it please thee, the sword to bathe itself in the blood of our sons; but spare us, Lord God Most Merciful, spare us that direst and most dreadful of all thy curses—an alliance with Napoleon Bonaparte." As he uttered these rousing sentences, the blood gushed from his nostrils; he unconsciously put his handkerchief to his face, and the next instant made a gesture which looked as if he were designedly waving it before the audience like a bloody and symbolic flag. You can fancy better than I can describe the impression which this incident, coupled with the awful apostrophe, made upon the crowded assembly. Next day I asked the young lawyer why he did not proceed, as he had promised, to pull the Doctor out of the pulpit. "Why," said he, "I was perfectly horror-struck when he wound up that terrible apostrophe by waving his bloody handkerchief."

The personal appearance and manners of this giant of the pulpit are well described by Dr. Bethune:

The physical qualities of Dr. Mason were worthy of the mind and heart that animated them. He stood, at least, six feet high; his frame was large, very muscular, but admirably proportioned; his head was massive, the forehead very broad and very high, showing what the phrenologist calls the organs of ideality, causality, benevolence and veneration, in full development. His features were regular, his eye full, clear and remarkably expressive; the nose straight, with the nostrils wide, the mouth firm, but not compressed, and the chin round and finished. In a word, though *handsome* is too poor a term with which to describe a union of intellectual, benevolent and courageous expression, it is seldom that such a man walks the earth. It was notorious that, at a time when an avowal of his political sentiments, with characteristic boldness, had roused the anger of the multitude to threaten him with personal violence, such was the majesty of his port in the open street as to compel the homage of all who met him. To these advantages was added a voice of surprising power, compass and modulation. Its tones were round, full and clear, without roughness or shrillness; at one time, sweeping all before it in a thundering torrent; at another, gentle and sweet as a mother's hushing her infant, yet never omitting the slightest inflection which a just emphasis required, and of that he had the keenest perception. His utterance was deliberate, though at times impassioned; never frantic nor maudling, but, in his utmost energy or subdued pathos, dignified and self-governed. Every consonant was heard, and the nicest orthoepist could rarely detect an error from the best usage. Hence his reading of Scripture constituted a special charm of his pulpit services, and many tell us that it was as good as a commentary, making difficult places plain, and giving new beauty to what was before but barely understood. Occasionally, when reading the Psalms from the version in use among the Scotch churches, he allowed himself what may be called a tone or rhythmical cadence, which displayed the great compass and flexibility of his voice. Few who ever heard him read on Communion days the 103d Psalm, can forget how he used to pitch his voice high, and then, by what the musician calls a *cadenza*, bring it down at the end of the verse to a deep, sonorous bass. His gesture was natural, though bold and sweeping; yet, with the exception of a thump upon his cushion, or a defying impulse of his clenched hand at the close of an argument, seldom violent, never artificial, but always the dictate, and therefore the accompaniment, of his thoughts.

We have a description of some striking scenes in the life of the distinguished Kentuckian, Dr. John Breckenridge, by the Rev. Dr. Krebs of this city:

In the controversies within the Presbyterian Church, he took a decided and earnest stand with the Old School. All his sympathies led him that way. In the darkest period of the great conflict, he shrunk not, neither was he disheartened. Sink or swim, he periled reputation and position in the issue, and ever stood firm to his convictions. This is not the place to discuss or to assume the merits of that controversy; but it is due to the truth and history of the case to state the estimate of his position in it which was formed by those who were associated with him in the conferences and consultations of that momentous time.

Notwithstanding the vehemence with which the debates of that period were conducted, and—making all due allowance for the imperfections of the best men and for the infirmities that appear in the arena of fervent controversy—I cannot recall an instance in which he ever forgot the amenities of the occasion, or lost his self-possession. I remember one occasion, indeed, which, at the time, and to one unacquainted with him and the circumstances of the case, might have appeared like a display of unduly excited feeling; though it really was not so. Without attempting to describe the scene, I will only say that it reminded me of one, in which, some years before, another minister from the same State figured. After an ardent debate, on an ecclesiastical trial, in which he had taken part, he overheard, but mistook the purport of, some angry threats of certain friends of the party arraigned. Supposing, however, that these persons were, as if in sympathy with himself, meditating injury to one, who, in the debate, had dealt him some unkind reproaches, he interposed, saying, "Gentlemen, I beg you to forbear; I feel no ill will to those persons, and have no wrongs to be avenged; I am a Kentuckian, indeed, but I am a Christian too." But he was speedily undeceived, and found himself to be the object of their purpose; when he rejoined, "Gentlemen, I beg you to beware; it is true, I trust I am a Christian, but you must remember that I am also a Kentuckian!"

His intrepidity of character needs no special illustration. It was a part of himself, and he would not have been himself without it. He never feared the face of man, and as a bold and uncompromising advocate of what he believed to be truth, he exhibited not only the *suaviter in modo*, but the *fortiter in re*. Once, when he was making a speech at an Anniversary of the Colonization Society, of which he was one of the stanchest friends, at a time when the public meetings in this city were often the scene of great excitement, some of his remarks on the subject, in its relation to Slavery, were received with peculiar expressions of disapprobation, by the opponents of that scheme who were present. The speaker was assailed with hisses; angry looks and gestures menaced him; and he was interrupted for a moment by the outcries and the confusion that reigned in the audience. Drawing himself up to his full hight, he cast around him a look of undaunted firmness, while a slight flush suffused his countenance, and even a smile played around his mouth, and said, "I am not to be put down by hisses or by threats. I was cradled where the Indian war-whoop yet mingled with the infant's lullaby, and trained by a mother whose earliest lessons taught me, next to the fear of God, not to be afraid of anybody." The effect of this speech, uttered with such serene composure and heroic dignity, was electric. The audience subsided into perfect calm, and he finished his address without further interruption, than that of enthusiastic applause. On another occasion, in making the Annual Address before the literary societies of the University, speaking from short notes—a usual practice with him—he advanced some sentiments which were not well suited to the popular sympathies of the time. A slight buzzing in the audience attracted his attention, and recognizing in it a dissent from his opinions, he paused, then uttered with majestic calmness these words, "I was born a free man, and by the grace of God, I mean to live and die one." The assembly was hushed in a moment to audible silence, but then there arose such a thunder of applause as overwhelmingly indicated its sympathy with the manly sentiment and avowal of a freeman's right to speak all his thoughts. It was as when a Roman theater received that utterance which spoke to the heart of humanity: "I am a man, and nothing that concerns man is alien to me."

Quick in repartee, he was often very happy—still so bland and courteous that he did not give offense. One day on the street he was met by a lady and gentleman, the latter of whom dissented strongly from Dr. B.'s Calvinistic sentiments, while he yet greatly admired his character and talents. He introduced the lady as his wife, adding sportively, "Dr. B., my wife is just one of your sort of folks; she believes that what is to be will be." "Ah," said he, "and I suppose I am to understand that you are one of the sort which believe that what is to be, won't be." It was a poser.

The plan which Dr. Sprague has adopted in the preparation of this work gives a perpetual variety and freshness to its pages. Every approach to monotony is avoided by the fact of his drawing so freely on the recollections of cotemporaries for the materials of his biography. The sketches thus furnished invariably possess a racy flavor which could hardly have been secured in a more formal style of narrative.

ABRIDGMENT OF THE DEBATES OF CONGRESS FROM 1789 TO 1854. By THOMAS H. BENTON. Vol. VI., 1817-1821. 8vo. pp. 744. D. Appleton & Co.

The present volume of this important national work includes the Debates of Congress during the first term of Monroe's Presidency. Those old questions of foreign relations which occupy so large a part of the preceding volumes, in this drop mainly out of sight; instead of which we are introduced to a new set of questions, several of them for the first time, and many of which remain active and vital down to the present moment.

The debates of this period, though still wanting—if it can be called a want—the superabundant fullness and endless outflow by which the Congressional reports of the present day are distended to such an enormous bulk, are yet a good deal fuller, and given with much more uniform completeness, than those of earlier years, especially the debates in the Senate, which now first begin to be reported with any considerable fullness. Still, however, there are important debates of which we have only sketches. As an instance how in cases of no small interest the reported debates, even during the period embraced in this volume, are still sometimes very lean, we may refer to an attempt made in the first session of the first Congress reported in it to pass a bill on the principle of the famous Fugitive Slave act of 1850. The new domestic slave trade, which had then recently sprung up, for supplying the cotton-growing States with slaves, having greatly increased the disposition of the border slaves to run away, Mr. Pindall, a member of the House from Virginia, brought in a bill in the year 1818 for assimilating the proceedings in cases of fugitives from labor to those in the case of fugitives from justice. The claimant having made out a title before some Judge of his own State—a principle adopted into the act of 1850—was then to be entitled to an executive demand on the Governor of the State where the fugitive was, with the imposition of heavy penalties upon those who refused to aid in the arrest.

This bill was debated in the House during three days, and it is certain that many excited speeches were made upon it. It was warmly opposed by Strong, Fuller and Whitman of Massachusetts, by Williams of Connecticut, by Livermore of New-Hampshire, and by several Pennsylvania Representatives, on the ground that it went beyond the Constitutional provision on the subject, and that the question of servitude ought to be tried in the State where the fugitive was. A motion was made by John Sergeant, then a Representative from Pennsylvania, to modify the bill in accordance with this idea, but it did not succeed. On the other hand, the bill was supported not only by Cobb of Georgia as a right of the slaveholders secured by the Constitution, and very zealously by Mr. Speaker Clay, but by Baldwin of Pennsylvania (afterward, perhaps therefore, a Judge of the Supreme Federal Court), by Holmes of Massachusetts, by Storrs of New-York (who anticipated Mr. Webster in urging that for the sake of union and harmony, Northern men must learn to conquer their prejudices), and by Jonathan Mason, then the representative from Boston, who, like his successor in 1850, not only voted for the bill, but professed a personal interest in the question, from his fear lest, if the bill failed to pass, his own town of Boston might be inconveniently infested by Southern runaways—an argument afterward taken up and urged in Faneuil Hall by the then embryo Judge, now ex-Judge, Curtis, in behalf of the act of 1850. Thus supported, the bill passed, 84 to 69; but of these debates we have only the slightest sketch, the whole being included in some five pages of this volume.

Having gone up to the Senate, the bill was referred to a Committee, of which Crittenden of Kentucky—who even then, forty years ago, held a seat in that body—was Chairman, who reported it back with several amendments, one of which provided that the identity of the alleged fugitive, after being carried back, should be established by some testimony other than that of the claimant. The bill was debated in the Senate for at least four days, but we have not a trace of what was said, except in reports of two speeches—one by William Smith of South Carolina, the other by Morrill of New-Hampshire—both of which were evidently written out by the orators. To show how little the tone and style of South Carolina have altered in forty years, we subjoin an extract from the speech of Smith, which we take the liberty to entitle

A BIBLE DEFENSE OF SLAVERY FORTY YEARS AGO.

But we are told by these pamphlet-writers that Slavery is "a violation of the Divine law." And the gentleman from New-York (Mr. King), in discussing this subject, has told us "it is contrary to our holy religion." And the gentleman from New-Hampshire (Mr. Merrill) has told us that in New-England they believe "all men are born equally free and independent;" that "every *human affection* recoils at their bondage." The gentleman has said, "the Bible is our moral guide;" and says it was the dealing in gold and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men, that produced the downfall of the great Babylon. And he seems to think that, unless we abolish Slavery, we shall provoke the wrath of Heaven, and that we shall go next. The gentleman has forgot one of the great offenses of that people; it was the taking of usury. The same Bible which he has adopted for his moral guide says: "Take thou no usury of him, or increase; but fear thy God." This part of the Bible must have become obsolete in New-England since the introduction of banks. It must now be pleasing in the sight of Heaven to see a dividend as large as twenty per cent. to each bank share. There are as many chariots, as many pearls, as much gold and silver, perhaps, in New-England as there was in Babylon at the time of its fall; yet they are in no danger till the vengeance of Heaven has fallen on the slaveholding States first, the gentleman seems to think.

Upon this great question, Sir, notwithstanding the opinion of honorable gentlemen to the contrary, there have been some very respectable opinions as to the Divine authority in favor of Slavery. We all know that *Ham* sinned against his God and against his father, for which Noah, the inspired Patriarch, cursed Canain the son of *Ham*, and said: "A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Newton, who was perhaps as great a divine as any in New-England, and as profound a scholar, in a book of great celebrity called his *Prophecies*, in which he endeavors to prove the divinity of the Bible by the many prophecies that are now fulfilling, says that this very African race are the descendants of Canaan, and have been the slaves of many nations, and are still expiating in bondage the curse upon themselves and their progenitors. But it may be said that this is only an *opinion* of Mr. Newton, and that we can see no reason in it. Mr. S. said, if the gentleman was unwilling to believe Mr. Newton, he would surely believe Moses and the prophets. And if the Senate would indulge him, he would show from the Bible itself, that Slavery was permitted by Divine authority; and for that purpose he would open to the 25th chapter of Leviticus, and read as follows: "And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them," &c. 39. "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant: 40. But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee." 44. "Both thy bondmen and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you: and of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. 45. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession: 46. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond-men forever," &c.

This, Mr. President, is the word of God, as given to us in the Holy Bible, delivered by the Lord himself to his chosen servant Moses. It might be hoped this would satisfy the scruples of all who believe in the divinity of the Bible; as the honorable gentleman from New-Hampshire certainly does, as he has referred to that sacred volume for his creed. It might satisfy the scruples of Mr. Kenrick, and the divines who appear so shocked at seeing a father dispose of his slaves to his children by his last will and testament, as they will perceive the Scriptures direct them to go as an inheritance. The honorable gentleman says, he speaks not only his own, but the universal sentiments of all those he represents. If he and his friends of New-Hampshire have not turned aside after strange gods, it is hoped the authority I have quoted might satisfy them.

The bill thus supported was carried, 17 to 13—Harrison Gray Otis of Massachusetts, Sandford of New-York, and Taylor of Indiana voting for it. But by the time it got back to the House, its Northern supporters seem to have taken some alarm, though to judge from the newspapers of the day it does not appear to have attracted much attention out of doors. At all events, in spite of repeated attempts on the part of its friends to take it up, it was suffered to lie upon the table, where it died. The suppression of this debate was indeed part of the standing policy on the delicate question of Slavery, pursued at that time by *The Intelligencer*, which then possessed a monopoly of Congressional reporting, undisturbed even by Washington correspondents. But the Missouri debates, which followed a year later, and which occupy a large part of Mr. Benton's present volume, made this secretive system no longer available. Not only in the course of that debate did the whole question of Slavery and Free Labor come in all its length and breadth before Congress, but full and elaborate reports of the speeches spread the discussion also before the public. From a speech of John W. Taylor of New-York, we select the following eloquent vindication of

THE RIGHTS OF FREE LABOR.

It is further objected, that the amendment [excluding Slavery from Missouri] is calculated to disfranchise our brethren of the South, by discouraging their emigration to the country west of the Mississippi. If it were proposed to discriminate between citizens of the different sections of our Union, and allow a Pennsylvanian to hold slaves there while the power was denied to a Virginian, the objection might very properly be made; but, when we place all on an equal footing, denying to all what we deny to one, I am unable to discover the injustice or inequality of which honorable gentlemen have thought proper to complain. The description of emigrants may be affected, in some measure, by the amendment in question. If Slavery shall be tolerated, the country will be settled by rich planters, with their slaves; if it shall be rejected, the emigrants will chiefly consist of the poorer and more laborious classes of society. If it be true that the prosperity and happiness of a country ought to constitute the grand object of its legislators, I cannot hesitate for a moment which species of population deserves most to be encouraged by the laws we may pass. Gentlemen, in their zeal to oppose the amendment, appear to have considered but one side of the case. If the rejection of Slavery will tend to discourage emigration from the South, will not its admission have the same effect in relation to the North and East? Whence came the people who, with a rapidity never before witnessed, have changed the wilderness between the Ohio and Mississippi into fruitful fields; who have erected there, in a period almost too short for the credibility of future ages, three of the freest and most flourishing States in our Union? They came from the Eastern hive; from that source of population which, in the same time, has added more than one hundred thousand inhabitants to my native State, and furnished seamen for a large portion of the navigation of the world; seamen who have unfurled your banner in every port to which the enterprise of man has gained admittance, and who, though poor themselves, have drawn rich treasures for the nation from the bosom of the deep. Do you believe that these people will settle in a country where they must take rank with negro slaves? Having neither the ability nor will to hold slaves themselves, they labor cheerfully while labor is honorable; make it disgraceful, they will despise it. You cannot degrade it more effectually than by establishing a system whereby it shall be performed principally by slaves. The business in which they are generally engaged, be it what it may, soon becomes debased in public estimation. It is considered low, and unfit for freemen. I cannot better illustrate this truth than by referring to a remark of the honorable gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Clay). I have often admired the liberality of his sentiments. He is governed by no vulgar prejudices; yet with what abhorrence did he speak of the performance, by your wives and daughters, of those domestic offices which he was pleased to call servile! What comparison did he make between the "black slaves" of Kentucky and the "white slaves" of the North; and how instantly did he strike a balance in favor of the condition of the former! If such opinions and expressions, even in the ardor of debate, can fall from that honorable gentleman, what ideas do you suppose are entertained of laboring men by the majority of slaveholders? A gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Barbour) replies, they are treated with confidence and esteem, and their rights are respected. Sir, I did not imagine they were put out of the protection of law. Their persons and property are doubtless secure from violence, or, if injured, the courts of justice are open for their redress. But, in a country like this, where the people are sovereign, and every citizen is entitled to equal rights, the mere exemption from flagrant wrong is no great privilege. In this country, no class of freemen should be excluded, either by law, or by the ostracism of public opinion, more powerful than law, from competing for offices and political distinctions. Sir, a humane master will respect the rights of his slave, and, if worthy, will honor him with confidence and esteem. And this same measure, I apprehend, is dealt out, in slaveholding States, to the laboring class of their white population. But whom of that class have they ever called to fill stations of any considerable responsibility? When have we seen a Representative on this floor, from that section of our Union, who was not a slaveholder? Who but slaveholders are elected to their State Legislatures? Who but they are appointed to fill their executive and judicial offices? I appeal to gentlemen, whether the selection of a laboring man, however well educated, would not be considered an extraordinary event? For this I do not reproach my brethren of the South. They doubtless choose those to represent them in whom they most confide; and far be it from me to intimate that their confidence is ever misplaced. But my objection is to the introduction of a system which cannot but produce the effect of rendering labor disgraceful.

James Tallmadge, jr., also of New-York, put in the following vigorous

REPLY TO THE THREATS OF THE FIRE-EATERS.

Sir, the honorable gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Scott), who has just resumed his seat, has told us of the *ides of March*, and has told us to "*beware of the fate of Cæsar and of Rome*." Another gentleman (Mr. Cobb), from Georgia, in addition to other expressions of great warmth, has said, "that if we persist, the Union will be dissolved;" and, with a look fixed on me, has told us, "we have kindled a fire which all the waters of the ocean cannot put out, which seas of blood can only extinguish."

Sir, language of this sort has no effect on me; my purpose is fixed, it is interwoven with my existence, its durability is limited with my life, it is a great and glorious cause, setting bounds to a Slavery the most cruel and debasing the world ever witnessed; it is the freedom of man; it is the cause of unredeemed and unregenerated human beings.

Sir, if a dissolution of the Union must take place, let it be so! If civil war, which gentlemen so much threaten, must come, I can only say, let it come! My hold on life is probably as frail as that of any man who now hears me; but, while that hold lasts, it shall be devoted to the service of my country—to the freedom of man. If blood is necessary to extinguish any fire which I have assisted to kindle, I can assure gentlemen, while I regret the necessity, I shall not forbear to contribute my mite. Sir, the violence to which gentlemen have resorted on this subject will not move my purpose, nor drive me from my place. I have the fortune and the honor to stand here as the representative of freemen, who possess intelligence to know their rights, who have the spirit to maintain them. Whatever might be my own private sentiments on this subject, standing here as the representative of others, no choice is left to me. I know the will of my constituents, and, regardless of consequences, I will avow it; as their representative, I will proclaim their hatred to Slavery in every shape; as their representative, here will I hold my stand until this floor, with the Constitution of my country which supports it, shall sink beneath me. If I am doomed to fall, I shall at least have the painful consolation to believe that I fall, as a fragment, in the ruins of my country.

Sir, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Colston) has accused my honorable friend from New-Hampshire (Mr. Livermore) of "speaking to the galleries, and, by his language, endeavoring to excite a servile war;" and has ended by saying, "he is no better than Arbuthnot or Ambrister, and deserves no better fate." Sir, when I hear such language uttered upon this floor, and within this house, I am constrained to consider it as hasty and unintended language, resulting from the vehemence of debate, and not really intending the personal indecorum the expressions would seem to indicate. [Mr. Colston asked to explain, and said he had not distinctly understood Mr. T. Mr. Livermore called on Mr. C. to state the expressions he had used. Mr. C. then said he had no explanation to give.] Mr. Tallmadge said he had none to ask; he continued to say he would not believe any gentleman on this floor would commit so great an indecorum against any member, or against the dignity of the House, as to use such expressions, really intending the meaning which the words seemed to import, and which had been uttered against the gentleman from New-Hampshire. [Mr. Nelson of Virginia, in the chair, called to order, and said no personal remarks would be allowed.] Mr. T. said he rejoiced that the Chair was at length aroused to a sense of its duties. The debate had for several days progressed with unequaled violence, and all was in order; but now, when at length this violence on one side is to be resisted, the Chair discovered it is out of order. I rejoice, said Mr. T., at the discovery, approve of the admonition, while I am proud to say it has no relevancy to me. It is my boast that I never uttered an unfriendly personal remark on this floor, but I wish it distinctly understood that the immutable laws of self-defense will justify going to great lengths, and that in the future progress of this debate the rights of defense would be regarded.

Sir, has it already come to this, that in the Congress of the United States—that, in the legislative councils of republican America, the subject of Slavery has become a subject of so much feeling, of such delicacy, of such danger, that it cannot safely be discussed? Are members who venture to express their sentiments on this subject to be accused of talking to the galleries, with intent to excite a servile war, and of meriting the fate of Arbuthnot and Ambrister? Are we to be told of the dissolution of the Union, of civil war, and of seas of blood? And yet, with such awful threatenings before us, do gentlemen in the same breath insist upon the encouragement of this evil, upon the extension of this monstrous scourge of the human race? An evil so fraught with such dire calamities to us as individuals, and to our nation, and threatening in its progress to overwhelm the civil and religious institutions of the country with the liberties of the nation, ought at once to be met and to be controlled. If its power, its influence and its impending dangers have already arrived at such a point that it is not safe to discuss it on this floor, and it cannot now pass under consideration as a proper subject for general legislation, what will be the result when it is spread through your widely extended domain? Its present threatening aspect and the violence of its supporters, so far from inducing me to yield to its progress, prompts me to resist its march. Now is the time. It must now be met, and the extension of the evil must now be prevented, or the occasion is irrecoverably lost, and the evil can never be contracted.

Sir, extend your view across the Mississippi, over your newly-acquired territory; a territory so far surpassing in extent the limits of your present country, that that country which gave birth to your nation, which achieved your Revolution, consolidated your Union, formed your Constitution, and has subsequently acquired so much glory, hangs but as an appendage to the extended empire over which your republican Government is now called to bear sway. Look down the long vista of futurity. See your empire, in extent unequaled; in advantageous situation without a parallel; and occupying all the valuable part of our continent. Behold this extended empire, inhabited by the hardy sons of American freemen—knowing their rights, and inheriting the will to protect them—owners of the soil on which they live, and interested in the institutions which they labor to defend—with two oceans laving your shores, and tributary to your purposes, bearing on their bosoms the commerce of your people. Compared to yours, the Governments of Europe dwindle into insignificance, and the whole world is without a parallel. But, Sir, reverse this scene; people this fair dominion with the slaves of your planters; extend Slavery—this bane of man, this abomination of heaven—over your extended empire, and you prepare its dissolution; you turn its accumulated strength into positive weakness; you cherish a canker in your breast; you put poison in your bosom; you place a vulture on your heart—nay, you whet the dagger, and place it in the hands of a portion of your population, stimulated to use it by every tie, human and divine. The envious contrast between your happiness and their misery, between your liberty and their slavery, must constantly prompt them to accomplish your destruction. Your enemies will learn the source and the cause of your weakness. As often as internal dangers shall threaten, or internal commotions await you, you will then realize that, by your own procurement, you have placed amid your families, and in the bosom of your country, a population producing at once the greatest cause of individual danger and of national weakness. With this defect, your Government must crumble to pieces, and your people become the scoff of the world.

The other principal subjects touched upon in the debates contained in this volume, and matters of present as well as historical interest, are protection to domestic manufactures both by increasing the tariff and substituting specific for ad valorem duties, the suppression of the slave-trade, the pension system, the neutrality laws, especially in their bearing on expeditions fitted out to aid the revolted Spanish colonies, and the right of expatriation on the part of persons choosing to engage in such enterprises.

How much, in these latter times, the debates of Congress have been distended—chiefly, we fear, with wind—is apparent from the fact that, while the first thirty-two years of the history of Congress are comprised in the six volumes of Mr. Benton's collection already published, and that with scarcely any curtailment of the debates as originally reported, he will hardly succeed in bringing the remainder of his collection into the ten volumes which he has reserved for it without calling in the aid of a talent for compression, which he has yet had but little occasion to exhibit. These debates, however, will easily admit of this compression; for, however the latter period may surpass the former in words, that former period was at least quite as fruitful in ideas. In fact, compression may greatly improve them. Those reports are far the best which limit themselves to giving the facts stated, the opinions expressed, the points, if any, made or attempted to be made by the speaker. It is chiefly as a repertory of facts, arguments and political opinions that a collection of Congressional debates is useful. For the gratification of taste and improvement in rhetoric they are hardly the sources to be resorted to. We trust and hope that Mr. Benton may be able to present the more modern debates in somewhat the same compact form into which the older ones were originally cast by the reporters. If he succeeds in that, he will have performed a task which will save many and many a weary search for needles in haymows, and one for which many a political and historical student will have occasion to thank him.